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General Assembly

Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

78th plenary meeting
Thursday, 6 December 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Kumalo (South Africa), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 21 (continued)

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

(a) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/171)

(b) Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/390)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.34)

(c) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/302)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.31)

(d) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/398)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.36)

(e) Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/474)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.26)

(f) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/55/996, A/56/449)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.35)

(g) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/301)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.25/Rev.1)

(h) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/122)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

01-67944 (E)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.32)

(i) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/125)

(j) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/489)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.37)

(k) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (A/56/317)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.38)

(l) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (A/56/490)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.30)

(m) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum

Draft resolution (A/56/L.29)

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Mali to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.36.

Mr. Ouane (Mali) (*spoke in French*): In reference to the item under consideration, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his exhaustive report contained in document A/56/398. In my capacity as president of the Group of Islamic States at the United Nations I would also like to welcome the continued strengthening of relations between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

In this respect, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/56/L.36. The draft resolution before the General Assembly recalls in its preambular part all the previous relevant General Assembly resolutions and emphasizes the importance of cooperation between the two organizations, including resolution 3369 (XXX) of 10 October 1975, in which the General Assembly decided to invite the OIC to participate in its sessions and work and in those of the Assembly's subsidiary organs in the capacity of observers.

The draft details the reasons for and advantages of cooperation between the organizations in their efforts to attain their common goals and objectives, such as those relating to international peace and security, economic and social development, self-determination, decolonization, disarmament and basic human rights.

In the operative part of the draft resolution, which has 15 paragraphs, the General Assembly takes note with satisfaction of the Secretary-General's report and also notes with satisfaction the active participation of the OIC in the actions undertaken by the United Nations to achieve its purposes and principles embodied in the Charter. The Assembly also requests that the United Nations and the OIC continue to cooperate in questions relating to international peace and security, disarmament, self-determination, decolonization, human rights and economic and social development. The Assembly also welcomes the efforts made by the United Nations and the OIC to strengthen cooperation between both organizations in the areas of common interests and to review the ways and means for enhancing the mechanisms of such cooperation. In the operative paragraphs, the Assembly also commends the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference for its continued cooperation in the field of peacemaking and preventive diplomacy and notes that both institutions continue to cooperate closely in the search for a peaceful and lasting settlement to the conflict in Afghanistan. The Assembly also welcomes the efforts of the secretariats of the two organizations to strengthen information exchange and their coordination and cooperation in areas of mutual interest in the political field and their ongoing consultations with a view to enhancing this

cooperation. The Assembly also welcomes the periodic high-level meetings between the secretariats of the United Nations and the OIC and between senior secretariat officials of both institutions, and encourages their participation in important meetings of the two organizations. The Assembly also recommends the convening of a general meeting of the representatives of the secretariats of the United Nations system and the OIC in 2002. It also recommends the convening a coordinating meeting in 2002 of focal points of the organizations and agencies of the United Nations, on the one hand, and its subsidiary organs and specialized and affiliated institutions of Organization of the Islamic Conference, on the other. The Assembly also encourages the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations to cooperate all the more closely with the subsidiary organs and institutions of the OIC in the priority areas of interest of the United Nations and the OIC. The Assembly urges the United Nations and other organizations of the United Nations system to provide the OIC and its subsidiary organs with increased assistance, especially on the technical level, in order to enhance cooperation. The Assembly is grateful to the Secretary-General for what he has continued to do for strengthening cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and its institutions, on the one hand, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference and its subsidiary bodies, on the other, and to thus serve the common interests of the two organizations in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres. In this respect, it requests the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at the fifty-seventh session.

These are the fundamental points of the current draft resolution. I am convinced that the Assembly will, as in the past, support the draft resolution contained in document A/56/L.36 — which I have the honour of introducing on behalf of the Group of Islamic States — and that, after review, it will adopt it unanimously.

Mr. Hønningstad (Norway): Let me express my delegation's satisfaction at seeing, for the first time this year, cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations as a single agenda item. This gives us the opportunity to be more efficient and have one debate in the General Assembly, but it also poses the problem that, in the interest of efficiency and time restraint, it is hard to comment on all the equally important sub-items on the agenda. This year I will therefore comment on the cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

The fact that Africa is still being ravaged by a number of armed conflicts, drought and continued underdevelopment underlines the great importance of strong and practical cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity. The OAU Summit held in Lusaka last July made the important decision to move ahead with the idea of transforming the OAU into an African Union. The new Secretary-General, Mr. Amara Essy, is now facing the formidable challenge of transforming the OAU into a well functioning organization that meets the huge aspirations created both by that decision and by the launching of the New African Initiative, which subsequently developed into the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Norway believes that United Nations assistance will be needed to achieve these ambitious plans. Strengthened cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU should further enhance the high ambitions for conflict prevention and resolution, good governance and democracy, as well as the economic and social development of the African nations, as envisaged in the NEPAD initiative.

The coordinated efforts of the United Nations and the OAU should be developed further. Many conflicts on the African continent remain unsolved and could benefit greatly from a joint United Nations-OAU effort. The new NEPAD initiative envisages African leaders taking the responsibility for peace and conflict prevention. With that strong commitment of African leaders to peace, the role of the United Nations should be a supportive one. Norway will continue to support the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and calls for United Nations technical assistance and for staff exchange programmes with the OAU.

Norway would also like to mention the cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in connection with the eradication of small arms and landmines. Norway urges the organizations to cooperate further to minimize the destruction caused by mines and small arms. The positive engagement by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in agreeing to a moratorium on the sale

and trafficking in small arms should serve as an example to others.

Norway commends the Secretary-General and the Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference for their commitment to cooperation between the two organizations, and their efforts to extend that cooperation to new fields of common interest. Norway fully supports their search for solutions to global problems related to international peace and security, terrorism, disarmament, self-determination, de-colonization, fundamental human rights and economic and social development.

Norway would like to stress both the importance of freedom of religion and belief and the role that religious communities can play in promoting tolerance and understanding and in seeking solutions to conflicts. We welcome the strong statement made by Mr. Abdelouahed Belkeziz, the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference after the terrorist attacks on the United States. He reaffirmed the organization's position and strongly condemned the terrorist attacks. Mr. Belkeziz stated that such acts are diametrically opposed to the religion of Islam and its teachings.

Through its broad regional influence, the Organization of the Islamic Conference is a vital partner for the United Nations. In our view, this cooperation is crucial in order to break the vicious cycle of war, terror and misery in Afghanistan. It is vital that the OIC supports efforts to find a political solution through a broad-based Government that includes representatives from all major groups. The future of Afghanistan must be placed firmly in the hands of the Afghan people themselves.

We encourage the two organizations to continue strengthening cooperation in the field of peace-making and preventive diplomacy. There is a need for a common vision of the reconstruction of Afghanistan in a regional context. Steps must be taken in consultation with Afghanistan's neighbouring countries. We believe that the OIC could play a major role in reaching a long-term solution that is acceptable in the region.

An important aspect of the relationship between the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the United Nations is cooperation in the field. Today well-functioning field cooperation has been established in many areas of conflict and instability in the OSCE region. This is clearly demonstrated in Kosovo. Within the framework of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the OSCE has the responsibility for institution building and democratization, fields that are within the core activities of the OSCE. This division of labour, based on the comparative advantages of the respective organizations, ensures that resources are used in a cost-effective way. Similar cooperation arrangements based on division of responsibility have existed in other areas.

The joint efforts of the international community during the recent crisis in The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia serve as yet another positive example. In Macedonia, the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the OSCE and the United Nations have coordinated their efforts to achieve a negotiated and peaceful settlement of the conflict. All the organizations play vital roles in the implementation of the Framework Agreement in The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and continued coordination is of the utmost importance.

Following the 11 September terrorist attacks, cooperation in Central Asia is particularly important. In recent years, the OSCE has established offices in all five republics. A number of United Nations agencies also have well-established programmes in those countries. We should therefore look for ways of enhancing coordination and identify areas where synergy can be achieved, and thereby maximize the impact of the efforts of the international community.

The OSCE will continue to be an essential partner for the United Nations in the years to come, working hand in hand with the United Nations in laying the foundation for economic and social development and in easing the burden of the world Organization in conflict prevention and conflict management in the OSCE area.

Norway has closely followed the cooperation that has developed between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations since the original cooperation agreement between the two organizations was signed in 1996. We have seen that the cooperation has expanded substantially during these years, with emphasis on core issues like peace and security, international law and human rights, democracy, gender issues and economic and social development. Today, international organizations recognize the benefit of developing a parliamentary dimension. We are convinced that national parliaments should be a cornerstone of such a

dimension. There is a need for more direct engagement of parliaments in the substantive issues addressed at the United Nations.

Thus, we believe there is untapped political potential in the cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU. For that reason, we welcome the Secretary-General's report (A/55/996), which proposes specific steps for achieving closer cooperation between the two organizations. We fully support the recommendation in his report that the IPU be given a standing invitation to speak and the right to circulate documents at the United Nations.

We regret that it has not been possible to adopt a draft resolution incorporating these recommendations at this session. However, having noted the overwhelming support in principle during the debate in the Sixth Committee for granting observer status to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, we suggest that we focus on next year's session. Then we will have a new chance to take this important step forward and confirm our commitment to enhancing cooperation between the United Nations and IPU by granting the Inter-Parliamentary Union both observer status and the right to circulate documents.

Mr. Jabar (Malaysia): At the outset, my delegation wishes to convey its appreciation to the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session, His Excellency Mr. Harri Holkeri, for his commendable proposal to cluster the items on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations; this was a significant step in streamlining the agenda of the General Assembly. The decision taken by the General Assembly last year to cluster those items will certainly contribute to revitalizing the Assembly's working methods and to improving its efficiency. It is our fervent hope that such efforts will continue under the able stewardship of the current President, His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo.

In our deliberations on item 21, my delegation wishes to give special attention to the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and three regional or other organizations, namely the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Pacific Islands Forum.

My delegation is pleased to note that the Secretary-General, in his report contained in document A/56/398, indicates a deepening of relations and cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC through high-level contacts, regular consultations and technical meetings. My delegation is also pleased to note that the Secretary-General's report this year is more substantive and focused in its content. We hope that future reports will contain suggestions on how cooperation could be further developed and consolidated between the two organizations. Both organizations must continue to explore new dimensions of cooperation in the field of peace and security as well as in other fields. The continued consultations on political matters, especially concerning ongoing peacemaking efforts in the conflict in Afghanistan and in the Middle East peace process, have become an important dimension in the cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC.

The OIC, founded 32 years ago, was intended not only to strengthen unity and solidarity within the Islamic *umma* — or community — but also to forge greater cooperation among its members, encompassing all areas. The OIC fraternity covers a vast geographical area and a large population dispersed all over the world. It represents a rich diversity of cultures and political systems that share the common heritage of Islam. With the active support of its members, the OIC has been able to fulfil its role as an important international institution serving the cause of global peace and security and striving to work for a better future for the Muslim community and for humanity as a whole.

The OIC has amply demonstrated that it is an instrument in the service of peace, development and solidarity among the world's peoples. We are gratified that the Secretary-General has acknowledged the positive role played by the OIC and has long considered the organization to be an important partner of the United Nations. The States members of the OIC firmly believe that the United Nations is well placed to bridge the gap between the Islamic countries and the rest of the international community through its mechanisms of dialogue and cooperation.

The report goes on to note that the OIC has participated actively in meetings of the United Nations and its subsidiary organs and has entered into cooperation agreements with various United Nations subsidiary organs. It is our hope that a memorandum of understanding to promote collaboration between the World Food Programme on the one hand and the OIC and its affiliated organizations on the other will soon

be formalized. We are gratified that both the United Nations and the OIC continue to strengthen their cooperation, in view of the increasingly important role played by the OIC in the international arena, in particular with respect to the implementation of the objectives of the United Nations in the areas of peace and security, decolonization, human rights, economic development and technical cooperation.

My delegation notes with satisfaction the increasing number of cooperative arrangements between the United Nations system and the OIC and its specialized and affiliated institutions. The report of the Secretary-General has provided very useful information on the level and extent of cooperation between various United Nations agencies and some of the specialized and affiliated institutions of the OIC. Since the signing of a cooperation agreement between the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the OIC in 1983, those two organizations have established close working relations through continued exchange of information and documents and regular consultations to promote joint cooperation programmes in the field of agriculture and rural development.

The convening this year at Cairo of an informal meeting between the Islamic Development Bank and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to consider the long-term development needs of the Palestinian economy was commendable, and we earnestly hope that the recommendations made there will be fully implemented.

We are also pleased to note that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the OIC, through the Islamic Development Bank and the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries, have focused their efforts on food security and rural development, training in agricultural policy analysis, trade in agricultural products, national capacity-building, promotion of agricultural production, protection of the environment and promotion of rural communities. A series of workshops and seminars on agricultural and other related issues has also been jointly organized. Malaysia supports those activities, along with others which both the United Nations and the OIC have identified.

My delegation notes that cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU has existed since 1947, when the IPU was granted non-governmental-organization consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. That cooperation was further strengthened with the signing of the cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the IPU in 1996. The Secretary-General's report, contained in document A/56/449, has outlined in detail the level of cooperation and the various activities undertaken by the two organizations in the areas of peace and security, economic and social development, international law and human rights, democracy, governance and gender issues. There is a tremendous wealth of experience, knowledge and organizational support that the IPU could offer in that regard.

The IPU is a unique inter-State organization of national parliaments. The current non-governmental-organization status accorded to the IPU has very limited privileges, denying the IPU the opportunity to contribute more effectively and systematically to the United Nations. The General Assembly should recognize and acknowledge the important contribution of the IPU to the work of the General Assembly. It is only fitting that the IPU should be allowed to participate in the work and activities of the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies. My delegation strongly believes that the IPU should be granted observer status in the General Assembly in order for there to be a more meaningful and productive relationship between the United Nations and the IPU.

My delegation welcomes the inclusion of sub-item (m) of agenda item 21, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum", in the agenda of the General Assembly this year. My delegation supports the establishment of cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum, given the Forum's commitment to establishing global partnerships in the interest of world peace and prosperity for all peoples. We believe that the two organizations could play an equal role in complementing and supporting each other in implementing their obligations, consistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. It is therefore appropriate that such cooperation should be given equal importance by the United Nations.

As a dialogue partner of the Forum since 1997, Malaysia will continue to extend its technical assistance through the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme to assist small and developing island States. To date, 698 participants from among Forum member States have taken various short-term and medium-term courses in Malaysia. Beginning next

year, the programme will be extended to participants from the Marshall Islands, Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia. We hope that this modest contribution will further enhance our cooperation with States members of the Forum and will contribute to strengthening the cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum.

In conclusion, my delegation hopes that draft resolutions A/56/L.36, A/56/L.35 and A/56/L.29 will receive the full support of the Assembly and will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Malofeev (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The delegation of the Republic of Belarus attaches particular importance to the Assembly's debate on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. In today's special international circumstances, the consolidation of United Nations global efforts and those of various regional arrangements has taken on particular significance. Although nearly three months has passed since the terrorist attacks against New York and Washington, D.C., those attacks are still perceived as a monstrous crime against the people of the United States and against the whole of humanity. That is why regional arrangements, as stipulated in the Charter, should assist the United Nations in resolving matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security on the regional level.

As a member of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Belarus and a national representative to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), I would like to address issues of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Today we observe actively growing mutual understanding between the two organizations. Every year the IPU organizes meetings of high-level United Nations officials and parliamentarians who are members of national delegations participating in the sessions of the General Assembly in order to discuss major United Nations initiatives and programmes. The Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments which took place last fall at United Nations Headquarters and which adopted a final declaration was an extremely significant and memorable event. The declaration stressed the need for strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and national parliaments in various areas through the structures of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. It is worth mentioning that over the past year the Inter-Parliamentary Union has adopted a number of resolutions and implemented a number of measures to support the United Nations. IPU leaders Ms. Najma Heptulla and Mr. Anders Johnsson have made an important contribution to that end.

Today's discussion will further contribute to the development of the relationship between the United Nations and the IPU, for which the necessary conditions are being established. The Union is undergoing a process of reform. Several decisions related to the reform of the IPU have been adopted in order to strengthen the Union and its relationships with national parliaments.

We are convinced that inviting the IPU to participate in the work of the General Assembly, as recommended by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, in his report of 26 June 2001 (A/55/996), would be an important landmark in strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and IPU. Belarus hopes that a draft resolution to that effect will be adopted upon the completion of negotiations on the text.

In developing cooperation with the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus attaches great importance to the establishment of stable relations with the parliamentary structures of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe. Exchanges of views with representatives of those organizations have been intensified. There are ongoing discussions on the most important issues relevant to our relations. We consider such dialogue to be important for the full integration of the parliamentary structures of the National Assembly of Belarus, whose members were democratically elected in 2000, into the European parliamentary system.

Now, I wish to say a few words about some issues of common concern. Unfortunately, mankind has entered the new millennium having inherited a heavy burden of serious problems. One of them is terrorism in its various forms and manifestations, which has become a clear threat to international security. Sadly, the geography of terrorist acts is expanding as well.

Thinking back to the crimes committed against the people of the United States on 11 September, crimes that shocked the world, I would like to observe that the people of Belarus, along with the rest of the

civilized world, learned with profound sorrow and indignation the news of those terrible crimes, which were of a kind that the world had never before experienced. The Republic of Belarus expressed its deepest condolences to the people of the United States and to all countries which lost citizens as a result of the tragedy.

The success of the international community's efforts to eliminate the root causes of terrorism depends, first of all, on the coordination and consolidation of the efforts of all States. The United Nations has now become the focal point for global efforts to eradicate this evil. We believe that the Organization should play a special role in developing the international community's strategy and tactics in the fight against terrorism.

The National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus has never relaxed its attention with respect to setting up a reliable domestic legislative shield for countering terrorism. Suffice it to say that on 1 October 2001 the Republic of Belarus deposited at United Nations Headquarters its instrument of ratification of the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings of 15 December 1997, which had been ratified earlier by the Belarus Parliament. Belarus became the twenty-eighth State party to that Convention. In the course of the current session, Belarus signed the last of the 12 international conventions on terrorism, the Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. The National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus intends to ratify that document in the near future.

Consideration of draft legislation on fighting terrorism, submitted on the initiative of the President of the Republic of Belarus, has become an important focus of the activities of Belarus parliamentarians. It is evident that all branches of power in Belarus are determined to fight all manifestations of terrorist activity. We intend to continue intensive work in that area.

Today, unity, solidarity, determination and steadfast action are the international community's trump cards in fighting terrorism. As one of the countries that suffered terribly from the horrors and deprivations of the last world war, the Republic of Belarus also endorses the views of many other nations on the unacceptability of transferring blame and responsibility from individual persons and groups of people to entire peoples and States. However military action may now develop, thousands of inhabitants of poor and underdeveloped countries will become its first victims. That is why today as never before politicians should be extremely balanced and sober in taking decisions on the use of military force. We are all responsible before humankind for preserving global peace and stability and for preventing a new world war.

Our country has also contributed to the cause of disarmament and the preservation of universal peace. We are against the development of new weapons systems, especially those of a global nature. The Republic of Belarus has voluntarily renounced its status as a nuclear nation and has withdrawn all nuclear weapons from its territory. A few years ago Belarus proposed the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe and an agreement not to deploy nuclear weapons in countries where they are not deployed at present. We believe that in the near future, if not today, the majority of European nations will support those initiatives.

Speaking here today as a representative of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus and as a member of the delegation of Belarus at the current session, I would like to assure Member States and the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, of our continued adherence to the principles of constructive partnership with the United Nations and with regional structures in the name of the noble goal of ensuring international peace and security and strengthening the well-being of all our peoples.

Mr. Boisson (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): This year, the Government of the Principality has decided to focus its statement on the cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF), because this cooperation covers an increasing number of areas in a spirit of exemplary complementarity and coordination.

Undoubtedly, the fact that the Secretary-General of the OIF was formerly our Secretary-General at the United Nations certainly contributes to this spirit and to the harmony in reflection, discussion and action between both organizations.

The delegation of the Principality of Monaco, which is a member of the OIF, took note of the report of the Secretary-General, a very precise and broad-ranging report on the cooperation between the United

Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie, with growing interest as we read it.

Over the past two years, since the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 54/25 on 15 November 1999, the consultations between both inter-governmental institutions have increased not only in number but also, and above all, in quality. My initial reaction is therefore to express my satisfaction and warm congratulations to the Secretaries-General of both organizations and the officials and staff responsible for carrying out this cooperation, both in New York, at the headquarters of the OIF in Paris and also, of course, within the member States, where these joint efforts actually take place. Whether they concern preventive diplomacy and the consolidation of peace or the promotion of human rights and economic, social and cultural development, these enterprises and actions have taken on a new and dynamic dimension that is both appreciable and appreciated.

Since the eighth Summit of Heads of State and Government of Countries Using French as a Common Language, held in September 1999 in Moncton, Canada, the dimension and political role of the International Organization of la Francophonie have undoubtedly expanded. Its actions, particularly in Africa, have been undertaken with competence and determination. We welcome this fact, because the consequences have been useful and beneficial.

The cooperation between the two organizations with regard to electoral assistance and support for democracy also seems very encouraging. Thanks to their coordination, their complementarity is excellent. The measures aimed at increasing this cooperation, developed during the meetings of senior officials of the two departments concerned on 5-6 March 2001, should undoubtedly allow the strengthening of that complementarity while increasing the number of effective or potential initiatives.

In the economic, social and cultural spheres, areas in which the OIF and its executive agency have long experience and high qualifications, the OIF has been developing a sound partnership with the United Nations and its specialized institutions, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), that benefits the member States of both organizations. The decisions and implementation of the action plans of the recent world conferences, and the special sessions of the General Assembly, in which the International Organization of la Francophonie took part, indicate the common will of both institutions to act together and in a concrete way to face the challenges of our world, primarily those of violence, poverty and ignorance.

I would also like to emphasize the very successful joint initiatives and measures undertaken by both international entities in the spheres of information and communication. The use of electronic communication was, in particular, the subject of joint training sessions organized in October 2000 and April 2001. This was a very positive initiative. Likewise, the cooperation undertaken by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the Agency of La Francophonie, in the form of joint training programmes for international civil servants with regard to the implementation of environmental legislation in the form of distance learning programmes, are excellent examples that should certainly be encouraged.

Finally, the pragmatic, effective approach that seems to inspire cooperation between both organizations in specific areas of international action in which they are both involved appears to us to be essential more than ever today We cannot but hope for their strengthening and further development, as called for in the draft resolution co-sponsored by the Principality of Monaco and ably presented by the representative of Lebanon, a country that next year will host the Summit of La Francophonie. We sincerely hope that this text will enjoy the broadest possible support of the international community, because, beyond the linguistic cooperation that it symbolizes, it may inspire and serve as a model for inter-institutional cooperation that is now being planned or is in the process of being reviewed with a view to renewing inter-relations and working methods.

I would like to note with satisfaction the meeting in December in Lisbon, Portugal, attended by the Secretaries-General and Executive Secretaries of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, the Latin Union, the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture and, of course, the International Organization of la Francophonie.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend my best wishes to the Secretary-General of the OIF, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and

express our appreciation for his dedication and commitment.

These institutions bring together 79 Governments and represent 1.2 billion men and women on the five continents. They have indicated a strong willingness to cooperate in essential disciplines such as new technologies and language education, with a view to promoting cultural diversity and multi-lingualism.

Ms. Garcia (Philippines): This session's consideration of the sub-item on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is of particular importance as we consider the adoption of a draft resolution that calls for a decision to be taken at the fifty-seventh session on the modalities for a new and strengthened relationship between these two organizations. It is my delegation's hope that our discussion this year will serve as a useful input to next session's deliberations.

My delegation has long valued the relationship between the United Nations and the IPU as an important element in promoting multilateral diplomacy. For many of us, diplomacy will be greatly enhanced if our legislative branches have greater input in promoting international cooperation through the United Nations, as well as a role in cultivating a greater understanding among Governments and peoples.

An item of particular significance is that the IPU can channel to the United Nations more diverse views, such as those expressed in parliamentary debates and discussions at the IPU. In addition, it can play a significant role in promoting parliamentary awareness and action in support of our work at the United Nations, as well as provide support for parliaments, with the aim of increasing their capacity to fulfil their legislative and oversight functions in matters that are subject to international cooperation at the United Nations. Through its close cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme, the IPU can also continue to contribute to the promotion and development of representative institutions of democracy, as well as offer a parliamentary perspective on developmental matters.

The importance of the continued and strengthened relationship between the United Nations and the IPU was clearly recognized last year. At the conclusion of the first-ever Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, held immediately prior to the Millennium Summit, the Parliamentarians, through their Declaration entitled "Parliamentary vision for international cooperation at the dawn of the third millennium", pledged their commitment to international cooperation with the United Nations. Subsequently, the various heads of State and Government, through the Millennium Declaration, resolved to strengthen further cooperation in various fields between the United Nations and national parliaments through the IPU.

More recently, my delegation notes the significance of the observation contained in the IPU Council report of April 2001 suggesting that the relationship between the IPU and the United Nations should bring a parliamentary dimension to the United Nations and permit the United Nations to cooperate with parliaments through the IPU.

My delegation thus welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union and his recommendations on the modalities for strengthening this relationship. My delegation is confident that at the next session of the General Assembly we can agree on specific modalities enabling the IPU to contribute its valuable and important experience to the work of the United Nations, especially the General Assembly.

The Philippine executive and parliamentary branches enjoy a close relationship in the field of multilateral diplomacy, particularly on issues addressed by the United Nations. Indeed, our delegations to the regular sessions of the General Assembly always include a significant number of legislators. Philippine parliamentarians also constitute part of our delegations to international meetings and conferences. Most recently, a Philippine Senator headed our delegation to the General Assembly's special session on the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

It is in this context that the Philippines will continue to support efforts to bring about a new and strengthened relationship between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Mr. Davis (United Kingdom): Last year, at the Millennium Summit, our leaders pledged unanimously to work together to make our world more peaceful, more prosperous and more just. That is an enormous challenge. While the United Nations, the most universal and most representative organization in the world, is ideally suited to play the central role in rising

to that challenge, it needs all the help it can get. That is why cooperation with regional and other organizations is so vitally important to the work of the United Nations.

In that regard, the United Kingdom fully supports the contribution made this morning by the representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union. We are also glad to have an opportunity to support the Secretary-General's recommendation that the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) be granted observer status here at the United Nations. We very much hope that next year the procedures can be properly followed to allow action to be taken to achieve that goal.

The United Kingdom also welcomes the report published by the Secretary-General in August in response to the resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session about cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe. I would, however, like to add a few words of my own, in my capacity as leader of the United Kingdom delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and a Vice-President of that Assembly.

It is exactly 50 years since the Council of Europe signed an agreement of cooperation with the United Nations. Much has been done in the meantime, but I should like to highlight a number of areas of cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe during the past year.

First, following the monstrous events of 11 September, the Council of Europe has shown its determination to fully contribute to the international action against terrorism. The United Nations, of course, has a pivotal role. But the Council of Europe's contribution will support and sustain, where appropriate, and with other multilateral forums, the international strategy to combat terrorism. In that campaign we will make full use of our own special assets, in particular our conventions, our legal instruments and, with a total of 43 member States, our pan-European character.

Secondly, I should mention the Council of Europe's contribution to United Nations activities in Kosovo. We have continued to help the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in matters of legislation and reform, especially in legal and judicial areas, and with a particular focus on human rights. The cooperation between the two organizations culminated in November with the elections to the new Kosovo Assembly. At the request of the United Nations, we provided a mission for the observation of the electoral process, in which Council of Europe parliamentarians participated. The fact that the operation was so successful serves to highlight once again the value of cooperation between the United Nations and the various regional and other institutions.

In Bosnia, too, the Council of Europe has worked with the United Nations to play an important practical role, once again particularly on human rights issues. Our legal experts have worked with the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina on, among other things, human rights legislation and prison reform. The two organizations are working together to ensure that Bosnia and Herzegovina's own membership of the Council of Europe is not far away.

I should also mention the close cooperation that has developed between the Council of Europe and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). Following the accident in Romania, we are working with the United Nations ECE to look at the transboundary impact of industrial accidents in terms of water pollution, and we are also active in the "Environment for Europe" process.

During the last year, the Council of Europe was also active, through its European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, in preparations for the recent World Conference against Racism. We were entrusted with the preparation at European level, which included a successful European Conference against Racism. We are now focusing on a follow-up to both the European Conference and the World Conference.

Of course our North-South Centre based in Lisbon has continued to promote awareness among Europeans of the problems experienced elsewhere in the world. This is important because it shows that we in the Council of Europe are not concerned only with the affairs of our own continent. We recognize that we are part of one world, and we are not interested in developments only in neighbouring regions, such as the Maghreb and the Middle East, but in the world as a whole. In the Council of Europe, we stand ready to work with other regional organizations to fulfil the ideals of the United Nations.

Other delegations have referred to other organizations in their speeches, but our conclusion

seems to be the same: that the United Nations can only benefit from strong cooperation with regional organizations — a conclusion with which the United Kingdom wholeheartedly agrees.

Ms. Ndhlovu (South Africa): The Secretary-General's report on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) makes many important observations and recommendations. My delegation has taken note of the report and believes that this report is useful, because it can only lead to stronger cooperation between the two organizations. We thank him most sincerely for his tireless efforts in advancing the cause of the developing world, especially Africa.

My delegation also wishes to congratulate the President on his leadership. We have no doubt that, under his stewardship, the affairs of the Assembly will be conducted in a commendable manner.

At the dawn of this new millennium, Africa has responded to the call for a continental sustainable development plan. This response has come at the right moment, when the continent is poised for a renaissance, both at the institutional level, symbolized by the soon-to-be-launched Africa Union, and at the social, economic and developmental level, epitomized by the New Partnership for Africa's Development. There is a symbiotic relationship between the two initiatives because the African Union will serve as the strategic mechanism to advance the objectives and programmes of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Africa also recognizes that it has to enter into partnership with the rest of the world to secure support for the rebirth of the continent. By strengthening its cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU)/African Union, the United Nations will play a pivotal role in Africa's renewal. Both the Constitutive Act of the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development complement the Millennium Declaration, by which Member States of this body committed themselves to responding to the special needs of Africa. The objectives of the Millennium Declaration and those of the New Partnership for Africa's Development are best captured by the Declaration issued by the heads of States and Government, which affirmed "our faith in the Organization and its Charter as indispensable foundations of a more peaceful, prosperous and just world." (*resolution 55/2, para. 1*)

Today we address this body with great hope and excitement, because there is a new dawn breaking in Africa. Africans have decided to shine the light of prosperity on themselves. We have arrived at the determination that human rights, democracy, peace, stability and justice are the fundamental building blocks of a prosperous continent. We seek to achieve sustainable development and economic growth by improving the conditions for economic renewal, as set out in the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The African-owned New Partnership for Africa's Development has set developmental goals, clear objectives, a road map and review mechanisms to ensure effective implementation and follow-up strategies for sustainable development programmes.

Since the entry into force of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, Africa has been looking forward to the next milestone and the defining moment of a new era of hope, prosperity and peace on the continent. We call for international support and assistance to establish the important organs of the African Union: the Pan-African Parliament; the Court of Justice; the Economic, Social and Technical Council; the African Commission on Peoples and Human Rights; and the Special Organ for Peace, Stability and Security.

The Constitutive Act of the African Union contains objectives that coincide with the goals of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the content of the Millennium Declaration and the provisions of the United Nations Charter. The most important objectives of the African Union are to promote peace, security and stability on the continent; democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance; sustainable development at the economic, social and cultural levels; and the integration of African economies.

Africa earnestly invites the international community to take part in a mutually beneficial partnership on the basis of what we as Africans have determined is the correct route to our sustainable development. This is a call for a new relationship between Africa and the international community, especially the highly industrialized countries. The continuous marginalization of the African continent, due to the process of globalization, has led to the widening of unequal relations within and between

countries. Experience shows that there is nothing inherent in the process of globalization that automatically reduces poverty and inequality. Africa is thus seeking a partnership that will ensure that it will play a role in the shaping of the form, content and the course of globalization, an international partnership that is characterized by fairness, justice, the promotion of social progress and better living standards. This is surely in line with the provisions of the United Nations Charter, which contains the minimum common denominator acceptable to all Member States. Africa is an indispensable global resource base on which this partnership should develop in order to benefit African people.

The Millennium Declaration has clearly spelled out the needs for concerted international cooperation in advancing Africa's development. The consensus reached at the Millennium Summit is to

> "support the consolidation of democracy in Africa and assist Africans in their struggle for lasting peace, poverty eradication and sustainable development, thereby bringing Africa into the mainstream of the world economy." (*ibid., para. 27*)

Through cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity/African Union, Africa calls upon the international community to assist in the efforts aimed at halving poverty by 2015; to achieve the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance; to assist in debt reduction and debt forgiveness; to increase private capital flows and investments into Africa; to support the reform of multilateral financial institutions to better cater for the needs and concerns of African countries; and to increase access for African products to the markets of developed countries.

Africa has embarked upon the extraordinary measures represented by the Africa Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development because we have an urgent need to eradicate poverty and address the destructive historical effects arising from a legacy of colonialism, war, conflict and disease. We invite the international community to join us as we implement these initiatives that lay the groundwork for a prosperous Africa that will triumph over the ills of poverty, disease, underdevelopment and despair. Their success is dependent on an effective partnership between government and people, along with the cooperation of the private sector and a true partnership with the developed nations that also have Africa's interest at heart. We welcome the initiatives aimed at assisting Africa to meet the challenges of achieving sustainable development, such as the G-8 special task force that will work together with the African Steering Committee and the African Union secretariat.

A lot of ground has been covered within the United Nations to promote cooperation with the OAU/African Union. The sessions of the Economic and Social Council in Geneva this year were exclusively devoted to the theme of promoting international cooperation to promote sustainable development in Africa. The United Nations maintains a liaison office with the OAU in Addis Ababa. We are of the view that if that office could be strengthened, the United Nations would better be able to achieve its stated intentions in Africa. The Economic Commission for Africa continues to play an important role in coordinating and facilitating cooperation between the two bodies at the economic level.

In conclusion, my delegation looks forward to the review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADF) over the next few months. This should deliver useful lessons to be learned from the past 10 years. We should build the future relationship between the United Nations and the OAU/African Union on these lessons learned. We will actively participate in that process, especially in designing a post-UN-NADAF relationship that takes cognizance of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Mr. Vámos-Goldman (Canada): I am here to speak on behalf of the Canadian Government in support of the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Canada has been a sponsor of draft resolutions submitted under this agenda item over the past several years, and we are pleased to be a sponsor again this year.

I would also like to acknowledge the presence in the Hall of the President of the Canadian Inter-Parliamentary Group, and a member of the World Executive of the IPU, Senator Sheila Finestone.

Just over a year ago, during the historic week of the Millennium Summit, the Inter-Parliamentary Union worked closely with the United Nations to convene a Conference of Presiding Officers of National

Parliaments at United Nations Headquarters. The objective was to provide a forum for debating major challenges on the global agenda through the lens of the parliamentary perspective, reflected in the statements and viewpoints of some 145 presiding officers of national parliaments from different regions of the world.

In their statements at the Conference, the speakers of the Senate and of the House of Commons of Canada emphasized the importance of a dynamic and strengthened relationship between the IPU and the United Nations — the former the longest lasting, the latter the pre-eminent international organization in the world. While the United Nations prepared to enter its second century, the IPU was, in fact, about to enter its third, having held its first Conference in Paris in 1889.

(*spoke in French*)

The Declaration of the Conference of Presiding Officers clearly underlined the support that the IPU can bring to bear not only in relation to the purposes and principles of the United Nations, but also in highlighting the role of the parliamentary community in developing multilateral cooperation by Governments through the United Nations system — both on emerging issues such as terrorism and HIV/AIDS, as well as on such long-standing matters as disarmament, human rights, equality between men and women, democracy, the rule of law, the protection of civilians in armed conflict, sustainable development and poverty eradication.

Canada supports such measures, as well as related initiatives aimed at making a greater contribution to the United Nations, pursuant to such instruments as the cooperation agreement signed in 1996; the Millennium Declaration, adopted by heads of State and Government in 2000, which indicated their strong desire to strengthen further the cooperation between the United Nations and national parliaments through their world organization, the IPU; and most recently, the Secretary-General's report of 26 June, recommending that the General Assembly should grant the IPU a standing invitation to participate as it wishes in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

(*spoke in English*)

The Secretary-General was more direct in his welcoming address to parliamentarians on 4 December, declaring that the parliamentary voice — the voice of the people — must be an integral component of the work of the United Nations. Canada wholeheartedly supports Secretary-General Annan's affirmation of his commitment to strengthening the parliamentary dimension of the Organization's activities. An integral proof of this is the recommendation that the General Assembly grant the IPU observer status. Canada believes that the IPU would make a valuable contribution in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly, its subsidiary organs and the national conferences convened under the auspices of the United Nations.

Canada shares the view of the Secretary-General that the IPU should be granted observer status. We believe that this view also enjoys broad support among Member States. Canada looks forward to an early, positive decision on this matter at the fifty-seventh session.

Mr. Behrendt (Germany): It is a great honour for me as a parliamentarian to be given an opportunity to address this body on the issue of getting members of parliaments more strongly involved in the activities of the United Nations. I would like to stress how important it is from my point of view to develop closer cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the only world organization for parliaments, on the one hand, and the United Nations on the other. Parliaments express the voices of nations and thus contribute to the democratization of international decision-making processes.

The United Nations has recognized the importance of such cooperation for making its work more effective. It is only if the resolutions adopted by national Governments at the level of the United Nations are implemented by national parliaments in the form of specific legislation that our common struggle for the development of all nations of the world and our efforts to promote human rights and democracy will have any chance of succeeding. That conviction was expressed in the Millennium Declaration last year. And it is only if the people we parliamentarians represent become convinced that nothing is decided over their heads, but rather that their elected representatives are able to provide a check on government action, that they will gladly comply with the legislative requirements that come their way.

The reports of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-

Parliamentary Union (A/55/996 and A/56/449) breathe life into the idea of closer cooperation with the Inter-Parliamentary Union and make specific proposals with regard to the future nature of our relationship. The German delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union welcomes the reports as a good point of departure for deepening the relations between the two organizations. I would be greatly pleased if a consensus could be reached at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly on granting observer status in the Assembly to the Inter-Parliamentary Union. That would be an important step in the right direction. We look forward to participating in further consultations on this subject in the months ahead.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union has already concluded important cooperation agreements with specialized agencies of the United Nations. Together with the United Nations Development Programme, the Inter-Parliamentary Union implements programmes aimed at strengthening national parliaments. With the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Labour Organization, the Inter-Parliamentary Union has cooperated in compiling manuals with a view to increasing awareness among parliamentarians of the obligations deriving from international humanitarian law and refugee law. After all, we are the ones who, in the final analysis, implement those international obligations on the basis of corresponding national legislation and budget allocations.

This fruitful cooperation should definitely be continued, and it should be expanded further.

In our cooperation we are also able to fall back on experience accumulated in regional parliamentary assemblies such as the European Parliament, the Andean Parliament, the Latin American Parliament and the Council of Europe. For more than 10 years, the Council of Europe has had observer status and has availed itself of that status to engage in cooperation in numerous areas. The Lithuanian presidency submitted an excellent draft resolution that deserves everyone's support. It makes reference to joint efforts in areas that are of concern to all of us. Those areas include: the fight against racism and xenophobia, social development, the fight against terrorism, and activities on the ground in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo.

As one of the Vice-Presidents of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, I am pleased that parliamentarians have been and continue to be involved in shaping the cooperation that takes place between the two organizations, for instance in monitoring the elections that have taken place in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo. The Council of Europe is able to make a substantial contribution towards the prevention of conflicts. For that reason it is worthwhile to continue to expand the current cooperation between the Council of Europe and the United Nations with a view to making better use of existing resources and avoiding overlaps in our activities. Therefore, I support the appeal being made to the Secretary-General to join Council of Europe leaders in sounding out the possibilities for further expanding our relations, for improving information exchange and for strengthening coordination between the United Nations and the Council of Europe.

Mr. Krokhmal (Ukraine): It is with great pleasure that my delegation takes part in the debate on the agenda item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations". In recent years, the international community has faced an increased need to intensify interaction between the United Nations and regional and other organizations.

Like other Member States, Ukraine attaches great importance to cooperation between the United Nations and other international organizations. We firmly believe that the United Nations continues to make considerable progress in ensuring that its relationships with regional organizations are mutually beneficial. That has been most evident in the strengthening of the leading role of the United Nations in global affairs. We believe that close ties with regional structures that reflect the political, economic and cultural diversity of the planet are a tool of vital importance that can help preserve and promote the unique international status of the United Nations.

In the light of overriding common concerns, it is only appropriate that we join forces to pursue our common objectives. In that regard, my delegation strongly supports the strategies for moving forward outlined in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Road map towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration" (A/56/326).

Today let me highlight a few points which are of particular importance for my delegation. Ukraine is

following carefully the development of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). The IPU helps in a significant way to intensify dialogue among societies and nations on pressing issues of international peace and security, human rights, the environment and economic and social development, and thus makes a substantial contribution to attaining the objectives of the United Nations.

Ukraine has been a strong supporter of draft resolutions on this sub-item because we strongly believe that the two organizations share a joint mission to make prosperity, peace and democracy the real universal values of the twenty-first century. We are grateful to the delegation of India for the introduction of draft resolution A/56/L.35, and we hope it will be adopted by consensus.

Cooperation between the United Nations and Euro-Atlantic structures is another crucial issue. Ukraine warmly welcomes the further development of ties between the United Nations and the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. We believe that cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe can be strengthened through joint efforts to formulate comprehensive strategies for conflict prevention on the basis of the wide use of preventive diplomacy and peace-building in both European and worldwide contexts. We believe that implementing that idea would be in broad consonance with the proposal to develop a comprehensive United Nations strategy for conflict prevention put forward last year by the President of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, at the Millennium Summit and at the Security Council summit.

Ukraine fully supports the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe and believes that that regional organization can significantly contribute to the work of the United Nations. The Council of Europe plays an important role in promoting democracy, human rights and the rule of law in Europe. Without imposing its views and values on the wider United Nations membership, it can comprehensively share Europe's experience with the United Nations, thus further enhancing the capacity of the United Nations to resolve some of the most pressing global challenges of the new century.

From our standpoint, draft resolution A/56/L.31, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe, contains all the necessary elements that form the basis for increased interaction between the two organizations. Ukraine will actively support all endeavours leading to the implementation of its main purposes.

Let me also welcome further enhancement of cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie. We strongly support the intention to intensify that dialogue, which yields important and valuable results. My delegation is pleased to be among the sponsors of draft resolution A/56/L.34 on this matter and calls upon all Member States to support it.

Mr. Marschik (Austria): Austria welcomes this first debate on cooperation between the United Nations and a number of regional and other organizations under a single clustered agenda item. This is a visible and effective measure towards the revitalization of the General Assembly. We are confident that the success of this innovation will make possible further initiatives with the same objective.

As regards the issue at hand, Austria can refer to the statement by the presidency of the European Union on behalf of the Union's members and associated States. Due to the interest and special responsibilities that Austria currently has in regard to certain organizations, my delegation would like to make the following brief observations.

Currently a member of the Troika of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Austria fully supports the statement of the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, the Romanian Foreign Minister. My delegation would like to congratulate Romania on a successful year at the helm of that important organization. Austria shouldered that responsibility last year, and we know well the many challenges that come with that function.

The OSCE is an excellent example of the multitude of ways in which a regional organization can cooperate with the United Nations — and with very impressive results, as we know. I would like to refer especially to the field missions of the two organizations, which are becoming increasingly efficient and successful in cooperating with each other on the ground.

The meeting of the Ministerial Council held in Bucharest at the beginning of this week paved the way for further cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations. The adoption of the Bucharest Action Plan against terrorism requires close interaction between the organs of the OSCE and those of the United Nations, in particular the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, whose headquarters is at Vienna. Austria is convinced that a decisive factor in our common efforts in combating terrorism is improved cooperation between international and regional organizations. My delegation is confident that the United Nations and the OSCE will fulfil our expectations in that regard.

As the host country for the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) Organization (CTBTO), Austria has assumed special responsibility for the successful preparation for the entry into force of the CTBT. In recent years much progress has been achieved, but some obstacles have emerged. The impressive number of signatures and ratifications underscores the almost universal support for the Treaty: 164 States have signed and 89 States have deposited their instruments of ratification. As we know, however, the Treaty has not entered into force because, unfortunately, 13 of the 44 States whose ratification is required have not signed or have not ratified it.

In that regard, my delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for having last month convened the second Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT. That event, held here in New York, convincingly reiterated the importance of nuclear non-proliferation and of its role in the framework of the United Nations. The success of the United Nations in this field relies on the inputs of all organizations involved. Austria therefore welcomes the excellent cooperation between the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO under its Executive Secretary, Ambassador Hoffmann, and the United Nations, cooperation which, as we know, was established by last year's relationship agreement between the Preparatory Commission and the United Nations. We hope that that cooperation will invigorate the discussion on the benefits of the worldwide verification regime provided for by the CTBT and will work as a catalyst to convince States of the importance and the utility of the CTBTO.

Permit me briefly to express Austria's appreciation of the excellent cooperation of the United Nations with the Council of Europe, an organization to which the Austrian Government and the Austrian people are especially committed. Over the years, the work of each organization has proved to have a significant influence on the work of the other. Most recently, the Sixth Committee's discussion on the cloning of humans for reproductive reasons provided a good example of how a regional initiative can be taken up at the global level.

In recent years we have also witnessed increasing cooperation on a variety of specific issues, as for example with regard to the protection of children, the monitoring of elections, the fight against terrorism and the International Criminal Court. Austria is confident that Member States will continue to support the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, and the Secretary General of Council of Europe, Mr. Walter Schwimmer, in their efforts to intensify the dialogue between the two organizations.

The debate today reveals once more the significant benefits that can be derived from close cooperation and interaction between the United Nations and other organizations. Global problems require both a global response and specific regional responses. At the same time, regional issues often have a global dimension. Consequently, there is an urgent need for an improved inter-organizational dialogue in policy-making, as well as for enhanced cooperation in operations. We are confident that our debate today will be another contribution towards improved cooperation in the future.

Mr. Bergqvist (Sweden): First of all, speaking on behalf of the Government of Sweden, I would like to fully associate myself with the statement delivered by the presidency of the European Union.

As a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, I will focus on the cooperation between the Council of Europe and the United Nations.

On Saturday next week, it will be exactly 50 years since the conclusion of the agreement between the Secretariat of the United Nations and the Secretariat of the Council of Europe. The purpose of the agreement is to facilitate cooperation through exchange of information, mutual consultation, attendance at relevant meetings and technical cooperation. The agreement is still valid, even if the two organizations have changed and developed enormously during the past 50 years. The Council of

Europe has become a truly pan-European organization, with one-fourth of the United Nations Member States as members or observers.

Had the agreement been written today, the aims would certainly have been more ambitious. However, what is most important at this stage is to expand the practical framework for cooperative activities and to develop the relationship through pragmatic identification of areas for collaboration. In this way, it will become much easier to undertake a worthwhile review of the agreement at a later stage.

The report to the General Assembly by the United Nations Secretary-General reflects the wide scope of cooperation that has evolved between the two organizations. At United Nations Headquarters, the Council of Europe has many fruitful contacts with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and there is even more substantial interaction with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Relations between the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Council are close at both the practical and political levels. At the request of the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo, the Council of Europe assumed responsibility for the observation of the municipal electoral process last year, as well as the Assembly elections this year, and the Council has also been active in other fields, such as reforming the judiciary, the protection of minorities, education policies and children and youth programmes.

The Council also enjoys close working relations with the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the High Commissioner for Refugees, as well as with the United Nations Office in Geneva, the Economic Commission for Europe, the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund.

It is gratifying to note the Secretary-General's appraisal that the prospects for further enhancement of cooperation are "extremely promising". Stronger bonds will benefit both organizations. There is no doubt that the Council of Europe can contribute substantially to the work of the United Nations in several fields where its expertise is well recognized. In that way, we can achieve less duplication and a more efficient use of resources. Even more importantly, we can enhance the support for our common values, as they are the cornerstones of democratic security.

A central field of increased cooperation is the work to maintain and fortify the international system of norms. This applies to the rule of both national and international law, as well as the development of democracy and human rights.

We should also highlight conflict prevention. Let us make optimal use of common resources to develop conflict prevention strategies and build a more systematic conflict prevention mechanism.

As a regional organization, the Council of Europe has proved that it can make a difference by consolidating democracy, the rule of law and human rights in Europe. Moreover, the Council of Europe has the capability to contribute to global peace-building efforts, as well as to the enhancement of democratic security against the threat of terrorism.

Furthermore, I would like to emphasize the parliamentary dimension of the Council of Europe. The Parliamentary Assembly was the first of its kind to be established in an international organization, and it has developed a lively interaction with the body of Governments of the Council. In this way, the Council of Europe has been able not only to promote constructive cooperation between Governments, but also to foster deep and broad relations between elected representatives of the peoples in the member countries.

Sweden remains deeply committed to both the United Nations and the Council of Europe, and we will continue to work in close partnership with both organizations in addressing the challenges of today and tomorrow.

Mr. Mbanefo (Nigeria): The debate today on the agenda item "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations" is most auspicious, as it coincides with significant developments on the African continent. Almost six months ago in Lusaka, Zambia, African leaders, at the 37th Ordinary Assembly, took the historic decision to transform the Organization of African Unity (OAU) into the African Union, thus concretizing the long-cherished dream of an independent Africa. That transformation also coincides with the adoption of an African-inspired and designed New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), encapsulating a visionary programme of action that will firmly establish the basis for growth and development and strengthen Africa's capacity to play a more active role in world affairs.

My delegation is therefore grateful to the Secretary-General for his important report contained in document A/56/489 that, inter alia, highlights these important developments and provides insight into the present healthy state of cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union.

The relationship and cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union is consistent with the provisions of the United Nations Charter, which defines and encourages partnerships with other regional organizations, especially in the maintenance of international peace and security. That cooperation has been particularly evident in the past year in the efforts to resolve the conflicts in the African region. The prevalence of these conflicts, notwithstanding, the best efforts of member States of the Union, bespeaks an urgent need to strengthen this cooperation with Africa to find lasting and durable solutions to the conflicts.

It is widely recognized that conflicts in Africa have regional and subregional dimensions. They have resulted in large movements of refugees, with enormous pressure on available infrastructure and scarce resources. Social and economic upheavals, from which vulnerable groups like women, children and the aged have suffered disproportionately, have reinforced political instability, thus undermining well conceived efforts at national development. The need for continued cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in conflict prevention and peace-building should therefore be emphasized so as to ensure an environment conducive to sustainable development.

It is pertinent to refer here to General Assembly resolution 55/218, which, inter alia, called upon the United Nations Organization to assist the African Union in strengthening the institutional and operational capacity of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, principally in the areas of development of its early warning system, the exchange and coordination of information, technical assistance and training of civilians and military personnel, including staff exchange programmes, logistical support in the area of mine clearance and the mobilization of financial support through the trust funds of the United Nations and the African Union.

We consider the relaunching, by the United Nations in May this year, of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa in Lomé, Togo, as a positive indication of such support. The Centre should be provided the necessary funding to enable it perform its role effectively. We also identify with the efforts of the Secretary-General on mine action, as reflected in the strategy adopted by the Inter-agency Coordination Group on Mine Action last September. We have no doubt that United Nations partnership and cooperation with Africa, which currently has the largest concentration of these mines, would serve the interest of our people.

The constitution of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the West African Subregion and the successful completion of its mission in June this year are another significant milestone in the relationship between the Organization and the African continent. The discussions with our leaders, civil society and non-governmental organizations, as well as with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) during the visit, and the recommendations reflected in their report, have provided the United Nations with a proper framework for productive engagement in addressing the challenges of conflict resolution, peace-building and development in the subregion. While confident that the recommendations would be fully implemented, we urge the Secretary-General to compose and send similar missions to other areas in our continent, particularly those experiencing crisis.

The promotion of a culture of peace, tolerance and harmony within and between States is cardinal to the creation of stability and security in Africa. In the past year, the full weight of the African Union's political support has been brought to bear on conflict areas. As a result, confidence and trust have been regenerated among and between groups in such countries as Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone. This has been done with the active involvement of the United Nations through the Secretary-General's Special Envoys and Special Representatives.

It is recalled that the international community was invited to address its cooperation to the special needs of Africa at the Millennium Summit last September. The specific action programmes contained in the Millennium Declaration can only be successfully implemented in close collaboration with the African Union, whose leaders approved the far-reaching initiatives under the New Partnership for Africa's Development. In this connection, we invite the United

Nations to reinforce support for democracy and governance programmes of NEPAD through effective assistance in capacity-building, particularly in public sector management, administrative and civil service reform and parliamentary oversight. Current extensive cooperation in peacekeeping with Africa should extend to the provision of funds to allow African military officers, particularly those serving with the African Union in subregional arrangements, to participate in training and short exchange programmes.

African leaders have made a solemn undertaking, severally and jointly to bear the responsibility for translating our vision of a new, confident and resurgent Africa into reality. We urge the international community and the United Nations to join Africa in realizing the goals it has set for itself.

Finally, let me address an issue on which United Nations cooperation has proved most invaluable in recent months. I refer to the challenge to combat HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. When African leaders decided at the African Summit on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and other Related Infectious Diseases, held at Abuja last April, to urgently canvass support and cooperation on the part of the international community, they did so in full appreciation of the profound impact of the spread of the pandemic on every sector of our national lives — our agriculture and food production, education and human resources development and, of course, our anti-poverty elimination programme.

We commend the Secretary-General for his positive engagement with leaders of our region, as well as for his energetic efforts in the search for solutions through the building of a global partnership. His appointment of a Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, as well as his launching of the Global Fund for AIDS and Health, which has attracted substantial contributions from Governments, the private sector and non-governmental organizations, are an indication of the Organization's commitment to a strong and virile Africa. We note with satisfaction that the United Nations Debt-for-AIDS initiative is assisting African countries to refocus attention to these issues in their planning.

As the institutional framework of the new African Union becomes firmly established, we look forward to further cooperation between Africa and the United Nations. We are confident that such cooperation will continue to be beneficial and enhance Africa's capacity to contribute to the goals of peace, security and development in our world.

Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea): My delegation is pleased to take the floor on agenda item 21, which has clustered 13 different sub-items in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/285. Although Member States are not yet accustomed to this new modality of joint debate, it is our belief that such clustering will ultimately enhance the efficiency of the Assembly debates and the streamlining of the agendas. Therefore, we sincerely hope that today's debate will proceed smoothly and set a good precedent for the next session of the General Assembly.

My delegation would like to share its views on cooperation between the United Nations and several organizations to which my Government attaches particular importance. First, let me touch upon cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Since its inception in 1889, the IPU has been successfully fulfilling its role as the focal point for worldwide parliamentary dialogue, living up to the goal elaborated in article 1 of its statute. The IPU has also greatly contributed to the work of the United Nations by bringing a parliamentary dimension and vision to United Nations conferences. In this context, my delegation is very pleased to note that cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU has been further reinforced since the adoption of the cooperation agreement in 1996.

My delegation commends the IPU for actively engaging in virtually every important agenda item of global significance, including international peace and security, economic and social development, international law and human rights issues. As is well illustrated in the Secretary-General's report on cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU (A/56/449), the Union has been making substantial contributions to major United Nations conferences and events by organizing an increasing number of round-table meetings of parliamentarians on issues under discussion or by issuing related documents and reports.

Such cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU is not just mutually beneficial, but also indispensable, as it can help enhance the transparency and accountability of the United Nations to the world public. It is also imperative for translating the commitments made at the United Nations into concrete

action in each Member State. In fact, the IPU could fill the policy gap between the global and national level by urging each parliament to legislate the outcome and recommendations of the United Nations conferences.

Having said that, I would like to echo the Secretary-General's recommendation to grant special status to the IPU, in the light of its unique character as an inter-State body representing 141 parliaments. In this regard, my delegation supports the initiative of the Indian delegation to grant observer status to the IPU. While dismayed by the deferment of a decision on this matter, we look forward to its adoption during the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. My delegation is pleased to announce that the Republic of Korea has also joined as a sponsor of draft resolution A/56/L.35.

Let me now turn to the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). My delegation welcomes the adoption of the relationship agreement between the United Nations and the OPCW. We are confident that this arrangement will enhance communication between the two bodies and ensure that the United Nations is kept well informed of the OPCW's activities. Such cooperation is especially critical in today's world, where, as recent events have demonstrated, we are facing a heightened threat of chemical and biological warfare.

Since the establishment of the OPCW in 1997, substantial progress has been made in disarmament in the field of chemical weapons. My delegation commends the steps that have been taken by the organization to bring about the complete destruction of such weapons and to promote the engagement of the chemical industry in this effort.

Obviously, the successful implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) largely depends on the effectiveness of its verification regime. Despite the difficulties encountered by the OPCW in carrying out its verification activities, my delegation is confident that the Organization will achieve its noble goals with the unswerving support of the international community. In this regard, we believe that the conclusion of the relationship agreement between the United Nations and the OPCW will provide added momentum to the effort to strengthen compliance with the CWC and promote universal adherence to the Convention.

As a member of the Executive Council of the OPCW, my Government has contributed to achieving the objectives of the Convention. Among other things, my Government introduced a decision, "Recommendation on ensuring the universality of the Convention" at the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention.

With the conclusion of a relationship agreement between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) this past June, the international community expressed its strong resolve to enhance cooperation between the two bodies. Since then, efforts to do so have had remarkable success, the most recent example of which was the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), held from 11-13 November in New York.

My delegation is pleased to note that there has been substantial progress in terms of establishing the CTBT's verification regime, which comprises the International Monitoring System, International Data Centre, Global Communications Infrastructure and on-site inspections. These measures should provide States parties to the Treaty with the capability to detect nuclear explosions, as well as enable them to make concerted efforts to analyse and address such violations.

While welcoming these developments, we cannot overstate the importance of universalizing the CTBT. The Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT certainly helped mobilize wider political support for this endeavour. In this context, my delegation hopes that the United Nations will play an enhanced role in the effort to achieve universality, thus bringing us closer to a goal shared by the greater part of the international community — the entry into force of the CTBT and the strengthening of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Last, but not least, let me touch upon the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Over the years, the OSCE has assumed a wide range of conflict-prevention and peace-building functions, including preventive diplomacy, post-conflict rehabilitation and humanitarian activities. Much of that work has been carried out in close

cooperation with the United Nations. Recognizing the value of regional arrangements, and the effectiveness of the OSCE in particular, we believe that the role of that organization should be further strengthened.

As a partner for cooperation of the OSCE, the Republic of Korea has made every effort to participate in, and contribute to, the activities of the organization, and will continue to do so. This past March, the Korean Government, together with the OSCE, hosted a conference on the applicability of OSCE confidence- and security-building measures in North-East Asia. Held in Seoul, the conference provided a unique opportunity for the two regions to share best practices and express solidarity.

Likewise, in the Asia-Pacific region, it is encouraging that, since its inception as the region's security cooperation process in 1994, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum has made much progress in addressing regional security issues. My delegation is of the view that increased cooperation between the United Nations and the ASEAN Regional Forum will serve to enhance the prospects for peace and security not only in the Asia-Pacific region, but also throughout the world. In that context, my delegation will consider in due course the inclusion of an agenda sub-item at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly on cooperation between the United Nations and the ASEAN Regional Forum, in close consultation with the Forum member States.

Ms. Crowley (Australia): My delegation welcomes the new approach of clustering consideration of the United Nations relations with regional and other international organizations into one agenda item. This is both a better way of considering how multinational organizations work together and a better use of the General Assembly's time. Today we would like to concentrate our remarks on two organizations, the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Pacific Island Forum.

One of the draft resolution before the General Assembly today calls for continued and closer cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU. It recognizes that there is logic in having the two bodies that represent the people of the world able to speak to each other and work together. However, it is necessary to understand that the roles and responsibilities of these two organizations are different and that, while they have much to offer each other, the process of their closer ties needs to be clearly elaborated.

In his remarks to parliamentarians on 4 December, the Secretary-General supported the understanding that the parliamentary voice — the voice of the people — must be an integral component of the work of the United Nations. He pointed out that parliaments are places where the laws of the land are made and where the range of views and beliefs of the community are represented. They are where the legislation that gives effect to United Nations resolutions on all manner of items, including very recent decisions on terrorism as well as further action on issues such as poverty, AIDS and the protection of the environment, is passed.

It is pleasing to note the Secretary-General's strong reminder of the importance of adequate representation of women in the ranks of all parliaments, as well as in the IPU, and the need for legislation to protect their rights and promote their advancement and well-being.

The Secretary-General has recommended further that the IPU be granted observer status in the General Assembly, and that this be a new starting point for building closer cooperation between the two organizations. As a senator for South Australia in the Australian Parliament, I have had the opportunity to attend a number of IPU meetings, both general and women's meetings. One of the things that is very clear is that the IPU does not speak with one voice, nor does it claim to; rather it is a forum where useful debate and deliberation on international issues can be pursued. There have been times in the IPU when passions have run high and what passed for debate has been robust, but it has rarely sunk to name-calling or abuse. This somewhat more volatile or fiery debate clearly distinguishes parliamentarians from delegates to the United Nations. Indeed, perhaps the United Nations could benefit from a little spice from parliamentarians, and parliamentarians could benefit from the mannerliness of United Nations representatives. Most IPU debates, though, have resulted in sensible and balanced communiqués.

Australia has long been a participant in the IPU, with a group of parliamentarians from both the House and the Senate attending meetings. The group does not represent the Australian Parliament, nor does it represent the Government or the opposition. Each

person goes as an individual. Usually the group arrives at an agreed position on the issues under discussion. However, it is clear that the IPU, like the Australian delegation to the IPU, does not speak with one voice, so there are consequences for any role that the IPU would play once it attained observer status in the General Assembly.

One issue that I and many other women have pursued has been the outcomes of our meetings. It is a matter of pride for the IPU that it is, what I call, the mother of the world atlas about the numbers of women in parliaments around the world. The IPU's atlas initiative was a consequence of requests for follow-up after IPU meetings. It an excellent example of the sort of thing that the IPU could offer the United Nations in its closer arrangement.

There is scope for other inventories to be produced. Take, for example, the debate that the IPU had about the protection of children — a very useful deliberation on a most worthwhile topic. As a follow-up, the IPU could send a form to every participating parliament, as they did in the case of women in parliament, seeking information about whether that parliament had legislation covering this question. The results could be published simply as a yes/no list for the information of participants and the wider community. The same could be done for a number of different topics.

It would be necessary to ensure that such productions were complementary to the output of the United Nations and that duplication was avoided. It would also help the United Nations address important questions of accountability — more and more important in times of tight fiscal restraint and when there are increasing numbers of people around the world who want to know about the outcomes and the follow-up to important conferences, debates and agreements.

While Australia has argued in the past in favour of retaining and strengthening the links between the IPU and the United Nations, and indeed reinforces that position today, nevertheless, it is important to examine exactly how those links would be developed. There is a need to be clear about costs involved, and any increase in cost to one or other organization has to be documented and agreed before any progress can happen. The IPU is confronting difficulties with regard to costs, and that is an issue that — as Australia has made clear in the past — it cannot support while doubt remains as to the ongoing ability of the organization to meet those costs.

Many parliaments operate under the principle of the separation of powers, that is, that the parliament is distinct from the executive Government, and it has a watch-dog role in keeping the Government accountable, especially in expenditure but also in the legislation that is passed. Such a distinction does not easily fit the IPU and the United Nations. Certainly, the IPU represents parliamentarians but, as has already been pointed out, the IPU does not speak with one voice. Accountability in the United Nations is to, and by, the Member States who constitute the United Nations. The continuing relationship between these two organizations will need further deliberation and definition as the draft resolution allows.

There is no doubt that anything that enables or encourages parliamentarians to reflect the ideals of the United Nations in their parliaments is only to the good. It may have been possible to argue in the past that the issues of the United Nations were not relevant to any particular country, but it is now beyond dispute that more and more of the issues raised in parliaments are of international dimension and concern. Many of the draft resolutions under discussion at this session of the General Assembly are cases in point, for example those relating to fisheries and the law of the sea, the environment, pollution of air and water and the very immediate question of terrorism. The same international focus is necessary for issues of trade, finance, markets for goods and services, wage parity and justice and human rights.

Here we are today at a place in history where the relationship between the United Nations and the IPU is taking a significant step closer. The peoples of the world we all claim to represent want a voice that is heard and decisions that improve their lives. Closer ties will help to ensure that we parliamentarians continue to reflect the ideals of the United Nations in our parliaments and the wishes of the people in the United Nations.

In closing, we would like to comment briefly on the potential for expanded cooperation between the United Nations and other organizations, including regional ones such as the Pacific Islands Forum. We are pleased to associate ourselves with the statement made this morning by the representative of Nauru on behalf

of the Pacific Islands Forum. We believe that constructive partnership between the United Nations and the Forum can enhance the Forum's own efforts to address regional security challenges, for example implementation of the Biketawa Declaration. Consultation between the Forum and the United Nations can also help more vulnerable island economies deal with the challenges and opportunities of globalization.

Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius): The importance of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the implementation of the principles and the fulfilment of the purposes of the United Nations Charter as well as in the promotion of the social and economic development of peoples can never be overemphasized. The Charter of the United Nations makes special provisions for such cooperation. Without regional organizations, the task of the United Nations in achieving its objectives would be extremely difficult. While we favour strengthening cooperation with all regional organizations, including the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), we would like to focus on United Nations cooperation with two organizations, namely the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the International Organization of la Francophonie, of which we are a member. In that regard, allow me to associate my delegation with the statement made by the representative of Zambia on behalf of the OAU.

We note with satisfaction that the United Nations and its specialized agencies have continued to implement and expand the agreed programme of cooperation with the OAU. That cooperation, which dates back to 1965, has grown steadily over time. Today, the need for the United Nations to work closely with the OAU is even stronger, at a time when the pan-African organization is in a transitional phase leading to its transformation into the African Union. My delegation calls upon the United Nations and its agencies to support the OAU transition and programmes aimed at the operationalization of the African Union.

The report of the Secretary-General (A/56/489) clearly emphasizes the need for ongoing cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in the areas of conflict prevention, peace and security, humanitarian issues and public information. The OAU has long been engaged in activities to advance the cause of peace and development in Africa. Its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution was set up specifically to deal with conflicts in Africa. The OAU is making a positive contribution in the search for solutions to conflicts in Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and Ethiopia and Eritrea, among others. Those conflict situations also figure prominently on the United Nations agenda. It is therefore vital that there should be close coordination and cooperation between the two organization; Mauritius indeed welcomes the ongoing collaboration between the United Nations and the OAU.

As an African continental organization, the OAU can play an extremely important role in preventing conflicts and in contributing to the resolution of those conflicts in close cooperation with the United Nations. It is, however, important that the OAU be equipped with the necessary facilities to be able effectively and promptly to address conflict situations. One of the areas where the United Nations could help the OAU is that of improving its early warning system. More frequent consultations between the United Nations and the OAU would also lead to concerted action in the settlement of conflicts.

The events of 11 September call for even greater cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in the fight against terrorism. Nobody and no country is immune to acts of terrorism, and the eradication of terrorism requires concerted efforts. By 1999, the leaders of Africa, meeting at Algiers, Algeria, for their annual summit, had adopted the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism. The 11 September attacks, which shocked the whole world and which led to the adoption of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), increased the obligation of all Member States to take effective action against terrorism. In that respect, the OAU can play an important role in coordinating the efforts and in identifying and addressing the needs of African countries for the proper implementation of resolutions against terrorism.

On the economic front, the OAU and Africa have been very active in facing the challenges of globalization. In its struggle to emerge from a low level of development, the OAU adopted the Cairo Plan of Action, which was followed by the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community. More recently, the OAU adopted the New African Initiative, now called the New Partnership for Africa's Development. Moreover, the United Nations

Millennium Declaration contains an entire section devoted to the specific needs of Africa. Given the readiness of Africa to shoulder its share of responsibility, and given the commitment of the United Nations, through the Millennium Declaration, to help Africa to become integrated into the world economy, my delegation hopes that the United Nations will closely involve the OAU in the implementation of the Declaration, especially its provisions that relate to meeting the special needs of Africa.

(*spoke in French*)

I note with satisfaction that in his report (A/56/390) on cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF), the Secretary-General speaks of strengthening that cooperation. Complementarity is essential, because in the agreement between the United Nations and the OIF of 25 June 1997 political issues constitute one of the principal areas of cooperation. For example the contribution of the OIF to the settlement of the conflict in Burundi clearly demonstrates that regional organizations can play an important role in conflict settlement.

Organizations should establish partnerships in the search for solutions to national and regional political problems. Here, the Secretary-General rightly takes note of the joint efforts of the OAU and the OIF to foster peace and reconciliation in the Comoros. Let me add that I myself was closely involved, under OAU auspices, in the efforts to restore stability to the Comoros, so I am in a position to speak of the extremely positive outcome of that joint endeavour.

While it is important to find joint solutions to political problems, development must continue to be the priority area for cooperation between these organizations and the United Nations.

The joint use of capacities for development and the strengthening of cooperation in the economic, social and cultural spheres should be encouraged. We therefore welcome the cooperation agreements signed between the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the OIF to provide technical and financial support aimed at promoting the status and role of African women.

Regional organizations rely heavily on cooperation with the United Nations, and Mauritius notes with satisfaction that some have decided to invest in the functioning of the universal Organization. In document A/56/390, the Secretary-General indicates that, pursuant to an agreement signed in 1999 with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the OIF is currently funding over 20 experts, all from developing countries, assigned to United Nations activities. The partnership between the United Nations and the OIF, which covers an increasing number of areas of activity in which the two organizations have joint interests, is only one among many examples of the success of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations.

The delegation of Mauritius fully supports efforts further to strengthen such links. We hope that this fruitful relationship will develop even more in coming years. My delegation is therefore pleased to support the draft resolutions on cooperation between the United Nations and the regional organizations.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): I am speaking in reference to sub-item (c) of agenda item 21.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe is long-standing. However, since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 55/3, interaction between the two organizations has continued to improve. Both organizations continue to have shared interests which lend themselves to cooperation in such areas as conflict prevention, post-conflict peace-building and confidence-building measures aimed at increasing tolerance and understanding between people belonging to different ethnic groups.

In this context, we note with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General in document A/56/302, which adequately reflects the fruitful cooperation between the two organizations and aims at exploring possibilities for the further enhancement of cooperation, information exchange and coordination between the United Nations and the Council of Europe.

It is highly commendable that the Council of Europe actively and productively cooperates with the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia. We also note the close cooperation between the Council of Europe and the United Nations Office at Geneva, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and others.

In this context, I would like to mention a parliamentary meeting on refugees and displaced persons in the South Caucasus, organized by the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography of the Council's Parliamentary Assembly, in cooperation with the Parliament of Azerbaijan in May 2001. Its purpose was to assess how far the humanitarian needs of the refugees and displaced persons in the region were being met and what progress was being made in implementing solutions and defining ways of improving the situation. During this meeting, the UNDP Resident Coordinator in Azerbaijan made a presentation on UNDP action in the South Caucasus States, focusing on strategies for promoting returns, integration and resettlement, as well as on current projects, new approaches and remaining obstacles.

Since the establishment in 1996 of UNHCR's Liaison Office to the European institutions in Strasbourg, its cooperation with the Council of Europe has developed into a comprehensive partnership focusing on the development of legal standards, the raising of awareness regarding human rights and the strengthening of civil societies as they relate to persons of concern to UNHCR. The relationship between the Council and UNHCR has evolved significantly, as the Council's unique pan-European membership coincides with the increased operational involvement of UNHCR in the problems of refugees and displaced populations of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe.

UNHCR and the Council are implementing a joint programme of technical assistance in a number of member States. This consists of co-organizing and conducting workshops on a variety of thematic issues of relevance to both organizations. For example, such a workshop will be held in my country on the implementation of legislation regarding non-governmental organizations and on the implementation of citizenship law.

January 2002 will mark the first year of Azerbaijan's accession to the Council of Europe. We consider our accession to the Council to be the beginning of a new stage of the development of Azerbaijan as an equal member of the European family. The accession of the country, which is located on an historic crossroads, to the Council of Europe is beneficial both for Azerbaijan and for the Council of Europe. We do our best to make our contributions to European values. These contributions will help to strengthen democratic stability in Europe and help Europeans to understand better and more thoroughly the historical destinies of oriental nations.

The strengthening of democracy is one of the priorities and is to be one of the main objectives of cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe. Azerbaijan pays great attention to the development of democracy in our region. We believe that it will serve as a guarantee for regional security and stability. We also believe that democracy cannot be developed in a society inflamed by the ideology of aggressive nationalism, national superiority and territorial claims on neighbouring States.

Today, conflicts are being incited, the territories of sovereign States are being occupied, ethnic cleansing is being conducted and a peaceful population is being expelled from its homes. Conciliation with aggression, the recognition of the results of illegal actions and the lack of a timely, adequate reaction from the international community have tragic consequences, undermine the foundations of sovereign States and cause humanitarian disasters. There should be no double standards. This area is indivisible and all conflicts need an equally serious and principled approach.

The Council of Europe, on its part, adopts a commendable and consistent approach. In dealing with the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, at its 108th session adopted the Final Communiqué reaffirming

> "respect for internationally recognised borders, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States throughout Europe, as well as for the other principles of international law set out in the United Nations Charter, the CSCE Helsinki Final Act and other relevant texts".

On 19 September 2001, the Committee adopted a decision which stated that

> "the right to self-determination should be respected, in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and with norms of international law, including those relating to territorial integrity of states. Consequently, this right may only be exercised following peaceful negotiations. Use of force for the purpose of acquiring territory is unacceptable

and any resultant acquisition cannot be recognised as lawful"

Through the promotion of democratic stability, the protection of human rights and the monitoring of its member States' commitments, the Council of Europe makes a substantial contribution to the activities of the United Nations by rendering its high-level of expertise.

As one of the sponsors of the draft resolution, our delegation expresses its confidence that it will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Naidu (Fiji): Fiji fully endorses the Pacific Islands Forum statement delivered earlier by Mr. Vinci Clodumar of Nauru.

In congratulating the Forum earlier this year on its thirtieth anniversary, former Fiji statesman and elder Pacific leader, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, announced that the Forum has become a potent factor in advancing the name and needs of the South Pacific. As one of the Forum's creators, Ratu Mara identified cooperation and leadership as critical assets for a self assured future for the region.

Today, therefore, we take great pride and joy in the milestone in the history of the Forum region that will be marked with the adoption of draft resolution A/56/L.29, ushering in a new era of cooperation between the Pacific Islands Forum and the United Nations.

The island States members of the Pacific Forum were born with their own political culture, each essentially subscribing to the "Pacific way". As it evolved over three decades, the "Pacific way" has braced our members, collectively and individually, helping us to emerge from a more rigid and politically prohibitive colonial culture to independence. In that process, and grappling with the myriad challenges then and now, our members have also shifted from the culture of dependency — a legacy of our colonial past — to greater economic independence.

We increasingly appreciate the value of, and the need for, a proactive policy over the reactive stances held traditionally. Much of the latter is attributed to the peculiarities and vulnerabilities that we face by virtue of being small island developing States, and exacerbated by our remote isolation. The lessons of the past have also built our resolve to be strengthened by these unique constraints and to determine our future directions and strategies that will keep us afloat in the face of the momentous challenges ahead.

We recognize that effective leadership and cooperation are critical assets for Forum members today as we engage in globalization, a global development reality that we neither dictate nor control but whose encompassing rules and framework we are drawn into as a matter of course. While we have developed our regional structure over the past 30 years, and have learned many lessons on the way, we recognize that the full benefits of membership for individual Forum members in this international family can only be optimally realized through a regional approach.

Granting observer status to the Forum Secretariat has merits. Yet actual cooperation evaded us and entailed greater burdens, again to be carried by the individual member States. Our visions in the Pacific Forum region duplicate the very goals and objectives of the Organization. Logistically, and therefore logically, cooperation would greatly enhance our strategies to achieve these goals with better-focused coordination to avoid duplication and unnecessary waste, which we can ill-afford.

It is high time to forge such closer cooperation — especially with regional groups and organizations whose members are predominantly from developing and least developed countries — in order to leverage our positions and give us greater voice and equitable representation and better recognition of our assessed needs and consequent demands which, on close scrutiny, are well within the scope of the various mandates of the United Nations. We have just typically been slow to utilize the available facilities and mechanisms, unless championed by bigger developed partners. This event promises to augment the strengths and benefits of existing bilateral and multilateral arrangements for our members. Conversely, we are confident that it will mitigate actual or potential adverse effects on our political and economic sustainability.

Fiji and its sister Pacific nations therefore have great hopes that, by forging closer cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum, we can stand taller, and together make enduring strides for our peoples in our mutually beneficial organizational goals.

Mr. Šimonović (Croatia): The Millennium Declaration goal of strengthening the United Nations as a forum for dialogue and effective action in order to cope with the challenges of this millennium, which includes better cooperation between the United Nations and other multilateral bodies and regional organizations. This idea is only briefly mentioned in the Secretary-General's road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, and it is the hope of my delegation that our deliberations today will provide valuable contributions to this end.

As we decided this year to examine the cooperation between the United Nations and several regional organizations under one agenda item, my delegation will concentrate its contribution on the cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe, and between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The United Nations and the Council of Europe, as well as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, have shared interests on the European continent to promote and strengthen democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, and to contribute to conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building.

The practice of tripartite high-level meetings between the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe is a prime example of cooperation and coordination of activities in areas of common concern that is already functioning.

An assessment of the role played by the OSCE points to the significant benefits that could be derived from collaboration between the various peacekeeping missions, programmes and agencies of the United Nations and the OSCE missions in various areas.

In the course of the last 26 years, the OSCE has evolved into a respectable regional organization capable of handling different challenges that pose threats to peace and security in Europe. Many of the lessons regarding that process have been learned in close cooperation with the United Nations, working side by side to try to bring peace and stability to different parts of the European continent. It is evident from the Secretary-General's report that the OSCE is making an important and positive contribution to regional and, by extension, global peace and security.

South-Eastern Europe has been a successful testing ground for a number of OSCE actions and new approaches — such as police training, democratization projects, institution-building, election organization and monitoring, and field presence.

Speaking on the basis of my country's experience, cooperation with the OSCE and its mission in Croatia has been very valuable. We shall continue our constructive dialogue with the mission so as to maximize its potential, bearing in mind the numerous positive changes in my country. Croatia believes that the continuation of positive developments will soon bring an end to the need for further OSCE presence in the current form.

Europe may be proud of its machinery and institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, yet of course more can, and should, still be done. The Council of Europe remains the leading regional organization in the field of the promotion and protection of human rights in both the standard-setting and the implementation dimensions. On the other hand, the European Convention on Human Rights provides for the possibility of recourse to the European Court of Human Rights. The rich jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights is providing relevant case law. The role of the OSCE in strengthening the common security and political framework guided by human rights principles is a remarkable achievement.

Recently, on 6 November, Croatia marked in its Parliament, the Sabor, the fifth anniversary of its membership in the Council of Europe, with Lord Russell-Johnston, President of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly attending. Croatia's membership in the Council of Europe was of special importance to further strengthening the rule of law and protecting human rights. In general, the Croatian legal system has greatly benefited from an overall legal reform in which national human rights law has been based upon United Nations and European standards in this field. Croatian courts have begun to invoke in their decisions articles from international treaties in the field of human rights, as well as judgements of the European Court of Human Rights.

Turning to our neighbour Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia welcomes the close cooperation between the United Nations Mission

in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Council of Europe, and shares the opinion of the Secretary-General's Special Representative on the need for its speedy accession to the Council of Europe. The Republic of Croatia believes that Bosnia and Herzegovina's membership in the Council of Europe would encourage good governance and have a very positive impact on further democratic development and the protection of human rights.

The cooperation between the three organizations could be enhanced in a number of ways, taking into consideration the mandate and primary role of each of them, as well as their specific expertise. For example, the Council of Europe could significantly contribute to the activities of the United Nations in the field of the promotion and protection of human rights through legal reforms, including the very important area of local and regional democracy, which does not have a counterpart in the activities of the United Nations system.

One of the key issues in re-thinking the role of regional organizations in the changing world continues to be the possible timely division of activities between the United Nations as the universal Organization, on the one hand, and relevant regional organizations, on the other. Close cooperation and a clear division of labour and responsibilities are indispensable in order to avoid the risk of unnecessarily duplicating existing efforts and mechanisms.

The International Conference on Human Rights and Democratization in Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus was held recently in Dubrovnik, Croatia, from 8 to 10 October. My delegation has distributed the Dubrovnik Conclusions under this agenda item as an example of good cooperation between the United Nations and other organizations — more precisely, between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the European Commission.

The scope of that Conference was to review the follow-up to some aspects of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, and more specifically with reference to the democratization and development of civil society and multiculturalism. High Commissioner Mary Robinson, in her opening speech in Dubrovnik, presented her ideas in a draft framework for regional cooperation, which placed particular emphasis on the following areas: national plans of action, national human rights institutions, human rights education and follow-up to recommendations by treaty bodies and mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights.

It is the hope of my Government that the Dubrovnik Conference and Dubrovnik Conclusions will be the beginning of a process of enhanced cooperation between the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Council of Europe, the European Union and the OSCE in the field of human rights and democratization, aimed at making activities more effective, avoiding unnecessary duplication and identifying opportunities for cooperation.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.